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INTERAGENCY ADVISORY GROUP

UNITED STATES CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION
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SUMMARY OF 322nd MEETING

January 19, 1978

I. Decentralization of Senior Level Examining

Mr. Jacobson introduced Arch S. Ramsay, Director, Bureau of Recruiting and Examining, and William Irvin, Director, Staffing Resources Division, for discussion of staff proposals concerning changes in the current Senior Level Examination.

Mr. Ramsay stated that the purpose of the presentation and discussion was to obtain a firmer grasp of agency opinion concerning the advisability of decentralizing the Senior Level Examination or abolishing the existent inventory and instituting a system based on individual recruitment for each Senior Level vacancy.

Mr. Ramsay reviewed the events leading to the development of three principal options for the modification of the Senior Level exam. Mr. Irvin then outlined the major features of the three options:

Option #1 - Abolish current inventory; agencies recruit and handle applications for each vacancy as it occurs: Commission's Federal job information centers (FJIC's) provide basic notice of opportunity to compete; establish individual ephemeral inventories for each position, with either the CSC or the agency--as negotiated--performing the rating, ranking and certification.

Option #2 - Same as Option #1, except that agencies would be responsible for all public notice and recruitment activities within guidelines to be established by the CSC.

Option #3 - Retain the existing inventory; modify job information and recruitment procedures and materials; permit agencies to take a more active role--on a case-by-case basis--in the rating, ranking, and certification of eligibles from the Senior Level inventory.

In any of the three options, existing procedures would be examined to determine the extent to which the outside competitive process could be run concurrently with the internal promotion process.

General Discussion and Comments by Members

- The members expressed a variety of opinions and concerns. One member pointed out that while the workload increase attending any decentralization and abolition of the existing inventory may be great, his agency would be willing to absorb it as the price of greater agency involvement.
- Other members opined that the current process adequately responds to agency needs, and that many of the agencies--particularly smaller ones--would not be able to absorb the workload.
- Support was expressed for making the outside competitive process as nearly coincidental to the internal promotion process as possible.

Mr. Jacobson, in summarizing the discussion, indicated that no consensus had been reached, but that the best approach could be to combine elements of all three options. For example, it may be possible to retain the current inventories for positions at the GS-13 level while pursuing individual decentralized recruiting and examining at the more occupationally unique but less numerous GS-14 and 15 levels.

Two action items were identified:

1. Members will furnish the Commission with written responses or critiques of the three options--or any modifications thereto which are felt to be appropriate--by February 1.
2. The Bureau of Recruiting and Examining will provide statistical summaries of past years' Senior Level certification request activity, broken out by occupation (series) and grade level.

II. Special Emphasis Program

Mr. Jacobson provided an overview of developments in the recently approved Special Emphasis Program (SEP). He opened discussion by outlining the structure and membership composition of the Steering Group, Interagency Work Group, and the CSC Work Group:

- o Steering Group, chaired by Hale Champion, Under Secretary of HEW, and including Clifford Alexander, Secretary of Army; Leonel Castillo, Commissioner of Immigration and Naturalization Service; James Joseph, Under Secretary of Interior; and Sarah Weddington, General Counsel of Department of Agriculture.
- o IAG Work Group, consisting of Personnel Directors from Agriculture, Air Force, Army, Energy, HEW, NLRB, VA; EEO Directors from GAO, Interior, Justice, Labor, NASA; and the representative from DLA who serves dually as Personnel and EEO Director.
- o CSC Work Group, consisting of selected key members of Executive Staff.

He reported that the Steering Group and IAG Work Group have begun meeting to discuss SEP issues. Several key points were made about the Special Emphasis Program:

- o Although intended to improve representation of women and minorities, the Program must be open to all--in order to meet legal requirements.
- o The Program is experimental in nature and will last for 5 years. Since our current competitive examining procedures have not resulted in a representative work force, the Commission wants to experiment with other approaches to examining in order to see if broader representation is possible and if individuals selected perform as well as those appointed competitively.
- o Through results of these experiments, some successful selection methods may be incorporated into future competitive examining processes.

Mr. Jacobson explained the data base that will be used to determine underrepresentation. In order to concentrate resources on areas of greatest opportunity, CSC staff are identifying the 140 occupations with at least 2,000 employees in them for representativeness determinations. Using data from CPDF for the Federal work force, a comparison will be made against availability of women and minorities as reported

by the Bureau of Labor Statistics for the general work force--except for professional occupations, which will use representation in the college enrollment population. Mr. Jacobson pointed out, however, that while this data will be used initially, as better data on the general work force becomes available it will be used.

Mr. Jacobson indicated that June 1, 1978, is the target date for implementation. During April and May, training of CSC and Federal agency personnel will take place. In summary, he envisions a decentralized operation at local levels, with enough built-in data flow to preserve the experimental nature of the Program.

III. Presentation of Certificates of Membership
Federal Personnel Administration Career Board

The Federal Personnel Administration Career Board has leadership responsibility for career programs for personnel professionals. The Board consists of six agency personnel directors, and one CSC representative, serving staggered two-year terms.

Members now leaving the Career Board upon completion of their terms are: James R. Beck, Jr., CSC; Richard D. Brady, VA; and S. B. Pranger, Agriculture. We are grateful for the contributions they have made and thank them for their time and energy.

Under the provisions of the new Career Board Charter, approved by directors of personnel at the IAG meeting of February 17, 1977, new members are appointed upon nomination by the Board itself. New members so designated for 1978-79 terms, for whom certificates were presented, are: Virginia Armstrong, Department of Housing and Urban Development and Anthony W. Hudson, Defense Logistics Agency.

The new Career Board Charter also provides for the Board to elect its own chairman. A new certificate was presented to William M. Paz, Department of Navy, who has been a Board member since last January, and who has been elected by the Board to a two-year term as chairman.

To replace Mr. Beck as the Commission's representative on the Board, Mr. Jacobson has named Frederick A. Kistler.

Board members have always been highly conscious of the fact that they serve, not as representatives of their agencies, but as spokespersons for the personnel directors generally and, by extension, for the personnel profession as a whole. The Board is interested in knowing personnel directors' views on what the program should be accomplishing. Personnel directors are urged to take advantage of the Board's standing invitation to contact any member on any matter they feel the Board should be addressing.

Announcements

- In Chairman Campbell's Memorandum to Heads of Departments and Agencies of January 11, 1978, he set forth a new CSC policy to encourage the development of cross-training programs for EEO and personnel specialists. These programs, he stated, should result in expanded career opportunities and in a more versatile and unified management team to deal with our increasingly complex employment issues. He urged departments and agencies to take immediate steps to provide formal career development plans for employees engaged in EEO work, stressing meaningful on-the-job training in operating personnel offices. He also encouraged agencies to provide onsite working experience in EEO for personnel specialists. To provide general direction to agencies on the development of improved career opportunities for EEO specialists, he enclosed Guidelines: Career Development for EEO Specialists, along with a Sample Training Agreement.
- Proposed Uniform Guidelines on Employee Selection Procedures were published in the Federal Register for comment on December 30, 1977. These Guidelines, if adopted, will replace the Federal Executive Agency Guidelines adopted in November 1976. Comments are due to the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission by March 7, 1978.

The Commission is in the process of sending the Federal Register material to IAG members. Because these guidelines have significant operational implications for Federal personnel management directors of personnel are asked to review them carefully, and to provide the Commission their assessment of the operational implications of the guidelines. The CSC will receive copies of whatever comments personnel directors choose to make to EEOC. However, personnel directors may have questions or observations that they would prefer to make directly to the Commission. They are asked to please feel free to do so. The Commission needs the Group's input so that they can make a careful assessment of the impact of these proposals on Federal personnel policies and programs.

- The Commission has just issued a new publication, Planning Your Staffing Needs: A Handbook for Personnel Workers, Bureau of Policies and Standards, 1977. This publication has been developed in direct response to personnel directors' expressed need for: (a) policy guidance on the role of personnel management in overall agency programs for identifying and controlling personnel requirements and planning staffing needs; and (b) step-by-step technical instructions, including automatic computer programs, on the new analysis and projection techniques which have been developed by CSC researchers for carrying out such responsibilities.

For additional information, see CSC Bulletin No. 250-9, Subject: New Personnel Requirements Planning Publication, dated January 18, 1978. Ordering information for this publication was outlined in the monthly consolidated CSC Rider Bulletin No. 171-550 of September 15, 1977. The rider cutoff date was November 1, 1977. For those agencies who did not order copies of the handbook by riding the Commission's requisition, it is available for sale at \$5.25 from the Superintendent of Documents, GPO, Stock No. 006-000-01020-2. Personnel directors who wish a single copy may contact the Policy Analysis and Development division, BPS, at 632-5622.